



Public Notice

U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers Galveston District	Permit Application No: _____	SWG-2006-2523
	Date Issued: _____	26 February 2007
	Comments Due: _____	28 March 2007

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, GALVESTON DISTRICT

PURPOSE OF PUBLIC NOTICE: To inform you of a proposal for work in which you might be interested. It is also to solicit your comments and information to better enable us to make a reasonable decision on factors affecting the public interest. We hope you will participate in this process.

AUTHORITY: This application will be reviewed pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.

APPLICANT: Texas Gulf Coast Stewards
1980 Ranch Road 1
Stonewall, Texas 78761

AGENT: Dick B. Stone
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LOCATION: The project is located in State of Texas Waters, approximately 8 miles offshore. The project can be located on the attached location map. Approximate UTM Coordinates are to be determined.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The following project description of the Texas Great Barrier Reef Project (TGBRP) has been provided by the applicant:

The project consists of thousands of reefs in 5 reef site corridors. The reefs will be made from both pre-fabricated designs and fill materials, with approximately 1,649,778 cubic yards of construction materials and rubble. The reefs will directly impact about 3,500 acres of bottom of the Gulf of Mexico over the 191,400-acre footprint of the 5 reef site corridors. The project purpose is to provide habitat enhancement through the construction of artificial reefs.

The Texas Great Barrier Reef Program will be utilizing donated obsolete bridge and concrete road-bed material, and non-functional preformed concrete structures like broken concrete culverts and other similar materials in addition to the fabricated structures. To provide habitat for juvenile fishes and encrusting/boring organisms, oyster shell, limestone rock (approximately one foot or less in diameter) and similar size pieces of clean concrete material (rubble) will be placed on approved sites, often near or around larger fabricated structures (see inserts showing relative profiles and position on the bottom on drawings for Sections A through E and Reef Density Analysis Plan). Because of the size and shape of these materials, they will be low profile (less than 3 feet), but will usually have more surface area than the fabricated material because of the volume and shape. All material will first be brought to staging areas where it will be inspected by TGBRP personnel, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) personnel, if they so desire, to ensure that it meets TPWD standards before it is put out.

The applicant proposes to build reefs in 5 sites of a reefing corridor described on the charts for sections (sites) A through E. Acreage by site is as follows:

Section A – 29,760 acres, Section B – 20,390 acres, Section C – 39,760 acres, Section D – 27,890 acres, and Section E – 73,600 acres. The total area in acres for these sections (sites) is 191,400 acres. We envision deploying a total of 391,113 reef units over the whole reefing corridor. We are defining a reef unit as an individual unit of fabricated material (approximately 3 cubic yards) or a single unit of approximately 8 cubic yards of other than fabricated materials such as rubble, limestone rock or oyster shells. This is shown on the Reef Density Analysis Plan as a 25' x 25' Rubble Area. A reef unit is a subset of a reef on a reef site. There will be thousands of reefs in the reefing corridor made up of a number of fabricated and other than fabricated materials. If we divided the material evenly between the 5 sites (Sections A through E) there would be approximately 78,223 reef units at each site at maximum build out. The exact number of units and reefs deployed in a given area or site, however, will depend on favorable bottom available, type of habitat needed, and the amount of fishing pressure expected. Low profile rubble and other low profile materials will only be used where the bottom type is appropriate (not on soft or shifting sand bottoms).

The total area covered by these 391,113 reef units on all sites would be approximately 3,500 acres. The total bottom area covered by reef material would be approximately 01.83% of the proposed reefing corridor (3,500/191,400). Therefore, there are 206,222 of these reef units at 8 cubic yards each included in our calculations for a total of 1,649,778 cubic yards for the whole reefing area or about 330,000 cubic yards per site assuming equal distribution among sites. There are 184,891 fabricated reef units included in our calculations at 3 cubic yards each for a total of 554,673 cubic yards or about 111,000 cubic yards per site assuming equal distribution among sites. The total volume of all type of reef units over the whole reefing area would be approximately 2,204,451 cubic yards (1,649,778 + 554,673). This was rounded up to 2,204,500 in the Reef Density Analysis Plan. We estimate the acreage (footprint) of the material used in the TGBRP at potential build out to be about 3,500 acres.

NOTES: This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This information has not been verified. The applicant's plans are enclosed in 8 sheets.

A preliminary review of this application indicates that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. Since permit assessment is a continuing process, this preliminary determination of EIS requirement will be changed if data or information brought forth in the coordination process is of a significant nature.

OTHER AGENCY AUTHORIZATIONS: Texas Coastal Zone consistency certification is required. The applicant has stated that the project is consistent with the Texas Coastal Management Program goals and policies and will be conducted in a manner consistent with said program.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES: The staff archaeologist has reviewed the latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places, lists of properties determined eligible, and other sources of information. The following is current knowledge of the presence or absence of historic properties and the effects of the undertaking upon these properties:

The State tracts proposed for work under this permit application are included in the Texas Antiquity Committee's list of State land tracts containing State Archaeological Landmarks. Therefore, the proposed activities may affect pre-20th-century shipwrecks.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES: Threatened and/or endangered species or their critical habitat may be affected by the proposed work. Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and/or the National Marine Fisheries Service will be initiated to assess the effect on endangered species.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Our initial determination is that the proposed action would not have a substantial adverse impact on Essential Fish Habitat or Federally managed fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

PUBLIC INTEREST REVIEW FACTORS: This application will be reviewed in accordance with 33 CFR 320-330, the Regulatory Programs of the Corps of Engineers (Corps), and other pertinent laws, regulations and executive orders. The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, will be considered: among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

SOLICITATION OF COMMENTS: The Corps is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials, Indian tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

This public notice is being distributed to all known interested persons in order to assist in developing facts upon which a decision by the Corps may be based. For accuracy and completeness of the record, all data in support of or in opposition to the proposed work should be submitted in writing setting forth sufficient detail to furnish a clear understanding of the reasons for support or opposition.

PUBLIC HEARING: Prior to the close of the comment period any person may make a written request for a public hearing setting forth the particular reasons for the request. The District Engineer will determine whether the issues are substantial and should be considered in the permit decision. If a public hearing is warranted, all known interested persons will be notified of the time, date, and location.

CLOSE OF COMMENT PERIOD: All comments pertaining to this Public Notice must reach this office on or before **28 March 2007**. Extensions of the comment period may be granted for valid reasons provided a written request is received by the limiting date. **If no comments are received by that date, it will be considered that there are no objections.** Comments and requests for additional information should be submitted to:

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